
POETRY | FALL 2020

Last Breath – 9-22-20

By Mark Hammerschick

We're sitting on the deck
no idea what time it is.
It's been a Martini Sunday
since 10 am.
The leaves in the trees seem different
canopies of coagulated breath
mirrored in your smudged wine glass.
A careless breeze casually stumbles
across the strained lawn,
my ice is melting too quickly
and armpits swell, expand,
moisture moves sideways
like your vacuous eyes translucent
in the slanted afternoon haze
but somehow it's not right nothing is.
We smile but there's no weight
it's like we're floating above ourselves
seeing the sound hearing your scent
and then I realize there is no breath
and your face does not move
and in that moment before the moment
of infinite intensity
a last gasp
those few furtive glances
as the terror of this moment
flows foreverfully silently
into that good night
beyond the silence of roses
moving in the morning wind
and in that mourning
we hold your hand
and in that holding
we move back into the womb
back into love
life to life
breath to breath...

Mark Hammerschick writes poetry and fiction. He holds a BA in English from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and a BS and MBA. He is a lifelong resident of the Chicago area and currently lives on the north shore; his professional career has been in digital strategy and online consulting. His current work will be published in *The Metaworker*, *Vext Magazine*, *Meat for Tea: The Valley Review*, *The Fictional Café*, *Wingless Dreamer*, *Trolley Magazine*, *Blood and Thunder: Musings on the Art of Medicine* and *The Write Launch*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Carcinogenic Poetry*, *The Toasted Cheese Literary Journal*, *Change Seven*, *Panoplyzine*, *Borrowed Solace*, *Muse Pie Press Shot Glass Journal*, *The Rockvale Review* and *Oregon Poetry Association*. His poem “Last Breath” appears in the Fall 2020 *Intima*.

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